

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, contact:

Jonas Macapinlac
Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
University of Guam
Tel: (671) 735-2944
Cell: (671) 787-1010
Email: jmac@triton.uog.edu

UOG to hold virtual commencement on Dec. 27

The University of Guam will confer degrees to more than 230 graduates at its Fanuchånan 2020 Commencement Ceremony on Sunday, Dec. 27.

The ceremony will be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be streamed at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 27, on the UOG Facebook page at www.facebook.com/UniversityofGuam.

Former valedictorian to deliver keynote

The virtual ceremony will include a keynote speech by **Dr. Edison P. Manaloto**, a two-time UOG alumnus and the 2006 UOG valedictorian who this year returned to Guam as a medical doctor at Guam Regional Medical City.

“Edison embodies the UOG motto of *excelsior*, or ‘ever upward,’” said UOG President Thomas W. Krise. “He has continually reached for the next level and the next means of making an impact on his home island of Guam.”

With a bachelor’s in accounting and master’s in public administration from the University of Guam, Manaloto first pursued a career in public and private sector accounting — working for Deloitte & Touche, the Hyatt Regency Guam, and Guam’s Office of Finance



and Budget and achieving the credentials of Certified Public Accountant and Certified Governmental Financial Manager. Later, seeing the pressing need for medical professionals in Guam, he applied for medical school at De La Salle Health Sciences Institute in the Philippines and became a Doctor of Medicine in 2015 and completed his residency at the University of Hawaii this past June.

Two to earn honorary degrees

The ceremony will also have a special recognition of two honorary degree recipients.

“Receiving an honorary degree shows that these individuals have not only become experts in their fields, but have earned the respect of our community and made long-lasting contributions to society,” Krise said.

Rosalia Fejeran Mateo, a master traditional healer — or *Yo’ãmtë* — for 64 years and one of the few remaining indigenous experts in her field, will be receiving the honorary degree of Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge. Better known as “Mama Chai,” she first apprenticed at the age of 19 under *Yo’ãmtë* Regina Terlaje and has since, through herbal medicine and massage, healed thousands of clients suffering from skin problems, respiratory issues, pain, infertility, women’s health issues, and more.

She was instrumental in opening Guam’s first Traditional Healing Center at Sagan Kotturan Chamorro in Tamuning in 2016, where she today sees as many as 19 clients per day. “I love to heal people. I love them,” Mateo said.



She has also helped develop an apprenticeship program and has been teaching and guiding two apprentices to learn traditional healing.

“They tell me it’s hard. [...] You have to be strong, be patient,” she said.

Rlene S. Steffy will be receiving an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Steffy is a mass communications specialist of 42 years with a diverse career as a writer, journalist, talk show host, and documentarian. She has come to be considered one of the leading oral-history practitioners in the region, capturing the experiences of war survivors, community leaders, and traditional knowledge experts throughout Micronesia. She recently documented her expertise and technique in the “How to Conduct Oral History Interviews” guide for the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

“It’s an art to collect a story. You have to learn to listen and you have to not be judgmental, and you have to appreciate the experience and the complexity the individual went through,” Steffy said. “[...] There’s so much we haven’t collected — cultural, linguistic, and archaeological experiences, adaptation — how have we [become who we are]? Who are we? That, I think, is important for the future.”

For complete details on the commencement ceremony, visit <https://www.uog.edu/commencements/fanuchanan-2020/>.



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